



# CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 18, 2010

## **H.R. 3885** **Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on May 12, 2010*

H.R. 3885 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a pilot program through which veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health conditions would train service dogs for use by disabled veterans. The pilot program would operate in three to five medical centers over a five-year period. CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$7 million over the 2011-2015 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Enacting this legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

H.R. 3885 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 3885 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 700 (veterans benefits and services).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011-2015
<b>CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>						
Estimated Authorization Level	1	1	1	2	2	7
Estimated Outlays	1	1	1	2	2	7

Based on information from VA, CBO estimates that the department would implement the pilot program in four medical centers and would require two recreation therapists and one certified dog trainer at each facility as well as one recreation therapist and a director to oversee the program. Based on a similar program at the VA facility in Palo Alto, California, CBO further estimates that each facility would train five service dogs every two years. Assuming the program would be phased in over three years and that the necessary amounts would be appropriated, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$1 million in 2011, growing to \$2 million a year by 2014.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Sunita D'Monte. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.